IOWA
Department of Education

2023-24 Education & Training Voucher Program

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Introduction

Funded by the federal government and administered by the Bureau of Iowa College Aid (Iowa College Aid) through a contract with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) awards up to $5,000 a year to students who aged out of the state foster care system or were adopted after age 16. Students may qualify for funding for up to five academic years or until they reach age 26, whichever is first. Students can use ETV for tuition/fees, room/board, books/supplies and other personal living expenses.

The following analysis utilizes custom data sets from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Iowa College Aid Processing System (ICAPS) and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). First-time, first-year cohorts are established by identifying students who self-report on the FAFSA as first-year students, receive their first ETV award in that same year and do not have a previous credential according to NSC data (students meeting these criteria are referred to as “first-time recipients”). The demographics of each cohort and details how they progress through postsecondary education are illustrated in this report.

Descriptive Analyses

The number of first-time college and first-year recipients of the ETV has declined from a high of 97 in 2014-15 to a low of 48 in 2020-21. Since 2020-21, the number of first-time recipients in a cohort has remained relatively steady. The percentage of first-time recipients reporting as female has fluctuated between 55% to 70% across all years. Meanwhile, the percentage of first-time recipients who are first-generation college students has been at least 72% over the past six years. The average Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of first-time recipients is consistently low and has averaged $68 since 2014-15. The average first-year award has remained somewhat consistent over time, yet nearly doubled for the 2021-22 academic year due to an increase in the maximum ETV award that was authorized under the Federal CARES Act (the maximum award increased from $5,000 in 2020-21 to $12,000 in 2021-22). The maximum award reverted back to $5,000 for the 2022-23 academic year. Finally, typical first-time ETV recipients received ETV awards for just under two academic years.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Cohort	Number of Students	Female		First-Generation		Average EFC	Average First-Year Award	Average Number of Years Receiving Award
		Awarded %	Awarded (N)	Awarded %	Awarded (N)			
2014-15	97	63.9%	62	56.7%	55	$39	$3,161	2.13
2015-16	86	57.0%	49	70.9%	61	$98	$3,054	1.92
2016-17	65	60.0%	39	64.6%	42	$56	$3,035	1.92
2017-18	78	61.0%	47	64.1%	50	$0	$3,270	1.92
2018-19	64	55.6%	35	76.6%	49	$4	$3,215	2.13
2019-20	65	66.2%	43	74.2%	48	$80	$3,610	2.11
2020-21	48	70.8%	34	81.3%	39	$0	$3,610	1.67
2021-22	56	60.7%	34	73.2%	41	$70	$7,176	1.46
2022-23	59	61.0%	36	74.6%	44	$350	$3,315	1.32
2023-24	57	*	*	71.9%	41	$0	$3,174	1
Averages of First-Time Recipients in First-Year of College	675	56.1%	379	69.6%	470	$68	$3,574	1.81
Averages of All Recipients	772	61.8%	442	69.2%	534	$90	$3,633	1.80

Persistence

Persistence is measured by the total number of students taking any kind of academic coursework in the years following their first year of college divided by the number of students in a cohort without a college degree. Cohorts are defined by whether the student is in their first-year of college (as defined by their FAFSA submission) and in their first-year of receiving the ETV. Any student taking a single course throughout the academic year that meets this definition is included in a Cohort. The persistence rate reflects the number of first-time recipients who have not completed a credential but continue to enroll from one academic year to the next (see Table 2).

The second year persistence rate was highest in 2014-15, at 56.3%. The persistence rate of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 cohorts dropped below 40%, but have bounced back to 50% for the 2022-2023 cohort.

While there are noticeable differences in the third-year persistence rate in the last few years, the fourth-year persistence rate is remarkably similar for the 2014-15 through 2019-20 cohorts. With the exception of the 2015-16 cohort, fifth-year retention in the cohorts was a little over 20%.

Table 2. Persistence

Cohort	Number of Students	2nd Year		3rd Year		4th Year		5th Year	
		Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)
2014-15	97	56.3%	54/96	39.8%	37/93	27.8%	25/90	20.5%	17/83
2015-16	86	43.5%	37/85	34.5%	29/84	32.5%	27/83	10.7%	8/75
2016-17	65	46.9%	30/64	37.1%	23/62	31.0%	18/58	21.8%	12/55
2017-18	78	46.2%	36/78	33.3%	25/75	29.6%	21/71	21.1%	15/71
2018-19	64	47.6%	30/63	38.7%	24/62	29.5%	18/61	24.6%	14/57
2019-20	65	54.7%	35/64	44.3%	27/61	31.0%	18/58	21.2%	11/52
2020-21	48	39.6%	19/48	29.8%	14/47	19.6%	9/46		
2021-22	56	37.5%	21/56	29.1%	16/55				
2022-23	59	50.0%	29/58						

Credentials

Table 3 illustrates the percentage of students receiving any postsecondary credential within four and six years of their first receipt of ETV. Of first-time recipients in 2014-15 to 2020-21, 13.5% (68) received some kind of credential within four years. The highest four-year credential receipt rate was 20.00% for the 2019-20 cohort, 11 percentage points higher than the 2017-18 cohort rate. The highest six-year credential receipt rate was 22.7% for the 2014-15 cohort, while the low of 14.1% occurred with the 2017-18 cohort.

When comparing the percentage of Iowa's ETV recipients who graduated by the age of 24 (19.2%) to ETV recipients across ten other states (16.0%), Iowa's rate was 3.2 percentage points higher (Hanson, 2022). When Iowa ETV recipients are restricted to those who were age 17 or 18 upon first receiving the award, 21.2% received a credential within six years.

Table 3. Credentials Received in Four and Six Years

Cohort	Number of Students	Four Years		Six Years	
		Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)
2014-15	97	14.4%	14	22.7%	22
2015-16	86	12.8%	11	17.4%	15
2016-17	65	15.4%	10	20.0%	13
2017-18	78	9.0%	7	14.1%	11
2018-19	64	10.9%	7	21.9%	14
2019-20	65	20.0%	13		
2020-21	48	12.5%	6		
Analytic Sample Total	503	13.5%	68	19.2%	75
18 Years or Younger Upon First Award				21.2%	42
Sample of 10 States' Recipients (Hanson et al., 2022).				16.0%	

Table 4 indicates the types of credentials awarded within six years of students receiving their first ETV award. Table 4 also illustrates the percentage of recipients who received an ETV award in the same year they completed the corresponding credential. Overall, 19.2% of all ETV recipients received a postsecondary credential. A total of 75 credentials were awarded to 47 individual ETV recipients (28 of those recipients received multiple credentials). Though the associate's degree was the most awarded credential, the second highest credential awarded was a bachelor's degree.

Table 4. Credentials Earned Among First-Time, First-Year ETV Recipients: 2014-15 to 2018-19 Cohorts

Credential	Credential Received		Received Credential While Receiving ETV	
	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)	Awarded (%)	Awarded (N)
Certificate	4.6%	18	55.6%	10
Associates	10.3%	40	77.5%	31
Bachelors	8.2%	32	81.3%	26
Graduate Degree	0.8%	3	100%	3
Any Degree	19.2%	75		
Multiple Degrees	7.2%	28		

References

Hanson, D., Pergamit, M., Tucker, L.P., Thomas, K., & Gedo, S. (2022). Do Education and Training Vouchers make a difference for young adults in foster care? *Urban Institute*.